

January 27, 2009

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Chairperson and Members of the committee, for the record my name is Betty Beverly and I am Executive Director of Montana Senior Citizens Assn. I am here today in asking you to vote for an expansion of Home and Community Based Services.

As I have traveled this wonderful state I have heard from many seniors who would like to have the choice of services when they need help with their care. All of us want to stay in our community close to our family and friends. Having a choice in how we receive care in our declining years is something that many seniors have saved for over the years. As their funds are depleted they want to be able to still have choices in where and how they receive care.

Also the retention of health care workers is important in this program. Over the past sessions the Legislature has given wage increases to the valuable workers who take care of the most vulnerable of our population in the varied health care settings. I encourage you to continue to increase the wages of direct care workers again this session.

Another important monetary issue is the increase of provider rates, especially the Assisted Living providers to increase the availability of beds for HCBS. We all know that inflation is a major reason for the increase of costs. There are beds in the community that could be available under the Waiver program if these facilities had a better reimbursement rate.

I have heard many stories of seniors who have went through their savings of up to \$200,000 and now need the HCBS Waiver program.

Thank You,

Betty Beverly
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